Montana
Energy
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MEAC

newsletter

STATE DOCUMENTS
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October 9, 1974

The purpose of this initial edition of the Montana Energy Advisory Council Newsletter is twofold: (1) to inform officials and citizen decision-makers of the structure and role of the Montana Energy Advisory Council, and (2) to begin to provide an indication of the energy-related efforts underway or completed in the coal development area. These research efforts address both human and natural resource concerns.

Funds in support of this newsletter and related activities have been received from the Denver regional office of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in the form of a discretionary grant.

MONTANA ENERGY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Montana Energy Advisory Council (MEAC) was created in April, 1973, by Executive Order of Governor Thomas L. Judge. Chaired by Lt. Governor Bill Christiansen, the Council is comprised of the directors of nine departments of state government, the Environmental Quality Council and the Office of Indian Affairs. The nine executive departments are: Department of Agriculture, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Department of Highways, Department of Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Department of State Lands, and the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. In addition, working relationships have been established with units of the Montana University System.

The role of MEAC, as established by the Governor, is to:

(1) Assist the Governor and other public officials regarding energy development and its associated impacts on the people and natural resources of Montana.

(2) Formulate a plan of work and implement information-gathering activities.

(3) Assemble, analyze and interpret information and report findings to the Governor, other public and private decision-makers and the public.

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(4) Inform the participating departments and other private and public entities and individuals on matters of primary interest to each.

(5) Consult with and provide assistance to the Environmental Quality Council in undertaking a state energy policy study.

(6) Provide a problem-solving procedure, drawing from various capabilities and disciplines of the universities of the state, to bring guidance and enhance the efficiency of state agency and university activities.

(7) Coordinate Montana's participation in federal, regional and multi-state energy-related programs.

(8) Recommend changes, if necessary, in existing state and federal statutes to protect and promote the policies of the state.

STATEMENT FROM LT. GOVERNOR BILL CHRISTIANSEN, CHAIRMAN OF THE MONTANA ENERGY ADVISORY COUNCIL

I wish to make two general comments. The first briefly addresses the energy challenge. The second suggests what we, as Montanans, can do to meet that challenge.

I am constantly asked the questions:

"How could the greatest nation on earth find herself suddenly, with minimal warning, in this energy deficient position?"

"How could we support the tremendous petroleum demands of a ten-year foreign war, and during that period still have adequate domestic petroleum -- yet, within two years of the cessation of our major involvement in that war, have severe energy problems at home?"

The environmentalist sees the situation in terms of excessive use and waste of energy (resources). The gas industry sees it in terms of locked in well-head prices; the automaker in terms of exhaust emission standards; the oil industry in terms of refining capacity and import quotas; the electric utility in terms of licensing delays; the university in terms of inadequate R&D, the Treasury in terms of balance of payments; and the coal industry in terms of strip mining regulations.

I could give an expanded list of conventional, and somewhat acceptable, answers to these questions, but I am not going to waste your time.

To sulk about events in history is self defeating. To learn from them, commendable.

Be comforted by the fact that if the annual doubling of our dependence on foreign oil had continued for a year or two more, and then the spigot had been turned off, a truly chaotic situation would have resulted.

I am, frankly, pleased that the world energy poker game forced our country to take an early look at our hole card. For my personal purpose, the energy history lesson I have learned is: "You cannot continue to supply infinite energy demands from finite energy sources."

The vast reserves of strippable, low-sulfur coal buried beneath the prairies of Eastern Montana now are being subjected to intense pressures for development. Decisions made in the next few years in relation to this development may well be the design for Montana's future.

In order to meet this challenge of determining the course of Montana's destiny, we must reverse the historic trend of decision-making in Montana. History has told us that many decisions crucial to Montana's future have been made in various corporate and governmental offices -- not by the citizens of this state.

The scope and rate of change looming on Montana's horizon make active public involvement a characteristic of great survival value. Government and the public simply cannot afford to operate in ignorance of each other.

Plans must be made to shape and govern economic development of Montana's coal resources and other non-renewable resources. Before sensible plans can be drawn, coherent policy must be available to guide those plans. And before policy and plans can be developed, the public, public servants and industry must engage in rational discourse over the nature and ramifications of the problems facing them.

If we expect to effect change in the course of our destiny, we must join in a conscientious effort to define state goals and to develop means of accomplishing them. I strongly urge that each community and county in the coal development areas of Montana take positive steps to inform the people of impending development and related impacts.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Montana Energy Advisory Council has been able to acquire copies of most of the research relevant to coal development in our area. We also have access to the files of the Old West Regional Commission, of the Federal Energy Administration, the National Governor's Conference, the Council of State Governments, and universities in Montana and other states in our region. We can help locate pertinent information and aid you in acquiring it. MEAC also will help you in contacting state agencies and personnel who may be of assistance.

For assistance, please contact: MaryEllen Larson, Research Analyst
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We suggest that some form of library be established in each town or county anticipating or interested in coal development.

Several research projects have been completed in both the socio-economic and natural resource areas. Some of these projects are presented below in abstract form. Further issues of the Newsletter will present abstracts of other projects and studies.

Socio-Economic Research Projects

Existing research efforts investigating socio-economic aspects of coal development are supported in three areas: (1) the Northern Great Plains Resource Program, (2) the analysis of the proposed Colstrip generating plants III and IV, and (3) a research contract between the Bureau of Land Management and MEAC. At present, only the results of the Northern Great Plains Resource Program effort are available, and some of these projects are not yet in final form. The results of the Colstrip investigation are expected to be available in late November of this year. The MEAC-BLM results should be available in mid-summer of 1975.

Specific reports are as follows:

Interim Summary of Recommendations Projecting Social and Municipal Service Needs and Cost and Revenue Calculation in Six Counties Where Major Coal Development is Anticipated, Leland, Williams and Patterson, Montana State University, Bozeman, Mt. This report discusses service program capabilities of impact counties, projects gross demands (qualitatively) on those services, and discusses potential problem solution strategies available to local and county governments coping with coal development. Some population projections are included within the report, though the authors have informed us they are only preliminary.

A Comparative Case Study of the Impact of Coal Development on the Way of Life of People in the Coal Areas of Eastern Montana and Northeastern Wyoming, Raymond Gold, University of Montana, Missoula, Mt. Utilizing ethnographic methods, this study portrays the impact of coal development upon the life styles of landowners and other residents of the development areas, including preliminary views of those persons brought into the area by development.

A Selected Bibliography on Coal-Energy Development of Particular Interest to the Western States, Norman L. Dalsted, Larry Leistritz, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota Agricultural Experimental Station, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota. This selected bibliography is intended for those engaged in research on the economic and social problems posed by the development of the coal resources of the western states. Publications from the areas of law, engineering and certain biological sciences, as well as economics, are included.

Natural Resource Research Projects

Quality and Reserves of Strippable Coal, Selected Deposits, Southeastern Montana, Bulletin 91, Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, Butte, Montana. This document presents detailed coal reserve data and analyses on a coal field by coal field basis.

Hydrologic Effects of Strip Coal Mining in Southeastern Montana - Emphasis: One Year of Mining Near Decker, Wayne Van Voast, Bulletin 93, Bureau of Mines and Geology, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, Bureau of Mines, Butte, Montana. This report provides the most comprehensive analysis of the impacts of western strip mining on the quality and availability of underground water. Van Voast describes premining hydrologic conditions and documents water table drawn down and water quality changes that have occurred during one year of mining.

A Proposal for the Evaluation and Assessment of In-Stream Value Studies Applicable to the Northern Great Plains Region, Report I (second report due Sept. 1976). Available from Ken Bovee, Department of Geology, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana. Mr. Bovee's preliminary report provides methodologies for estimating the value of public uses of water foregone by massive diversions.

Rehabilitation Potential of Western Coal Lands, National Academy of Sciences, Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge, Mass. Cost is $2.95 for paperback and is 144 pages in length. One of the nation's most respected scientific organizationstreats reclamation possibilities for coal lands and further discusses water availability for coal industrialization.

Recreation Inventory of State Lands Along the Yellowstone and Its Tributaries, Montana Department of State Lands, Capitol Complex, Helena, Montana.

Other Research Projects

Coal Development Fact Sheet, Montana Energy Advisory Council, to be completed by November 1, 1974, available upon request from the Montana Energy Advisory Council, Capitol Building, Helena, Montana 59601. The fact sheet will contain excerpted coal reserve data, the status of coal leasing and exploration activities, projected industrial developments and anticipated university research projects. Tax data and projections and profiles of resource and labor requirements for hypothetical strip mines, power plants and gasification plants are included.

Managing Our Energy Future, Upper Midwest Council, 250 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn. 55480. The price is $2.00 per copy. The Upper Midwest Council concentrated its efforts in five areas -- Western Coal Development and Use, Energy Conservation, Natural Gas Availability, Effects of Higher Energy Cost, and Public Response. A primary consideration in selecting these major topic areas was the task force's desire to restrict its efforts to current problems requiring decisions in the immediate future.

Energy Resource Development for the West, Western Interstate Nuclear Board, P.O. Box 15038, Lakewood, Colorado 80215. This report examines the total energy production and consumption of the western states for the calendar year 1971 with emphasis on the electrical generation needs of the West. The report suggests how the western states can assist in developing a new national energy pattern and become a net exporter with respect to energy in certain forms. Not included in the energy balance is the energy invested in products shipped into the region or the energy in the uranium shipped out of the West. The report addresses itself to three time frames: Near-term -- through 1974, Transitional -- through 1985, Long-term -- 1986 to 2000.